

A RESOLUTION to recognize and endorse the effectiveness of voluntary programs to protect water quality on agricultural and forest lands in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, recently published data in the National Resources Inventory conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture show a 50 percent reduction in soil erosion in Tennessee from 1977 to 1992, i.e. an improvement from 14.1 tons/acre/year to 7.1 tons/acre/year; and

WHEREAS, such improvements in erosion control and associated water quality impacts can be attributed to the voluntary adoption of innovative conservation practices such as no-till technology and participation in the federal Conservation Reserve Program; and

WHEREAS, since 1992, an additional reduction in erosion rates has occurred that is associated with conservation compliance provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill (Food Securities Act); and

WHEREAS, in Fiscal Year 1994, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture through its voluntary Agricultural Nonpoint Water Pollution Control Program established soil and water protection measures on 45,600 acres of private farmland--a ten-fold increase in lands treated annually since the Department initiated the program in 1991; and

WHEREAS, for the past fifty years the ninety-five soil conservation districts have implemented the voluntary conservation program with technical assistance provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and

WHEREAS, in the past five years, approximately 200 loggers have been certified as Master Loggers by the Tennessee Forestry Association and approximately 3000 loggers and operators have been trained by the Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry in the

application of Best Management Practices to prevent water pollution caused by forestry activities; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly concurs with the findings of the State Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Management Program that forestry activities have not been shown to be a major contributor to water quality degradation in Tennessee, and that voluntary programs are the most practical and cost-effective alternatives for achieving any necessary reductions in forestry-caused nonpoint source pollution; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the General Assembly commends the voluntary efforts and significant progress that Tennessee landowners have made to prevent water pollution associated with agricultural and forestry activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the General Assembly recognizes the value and effectiveness of cooperative efforts and partnerships among agencies, organizations, and individuals within the agricultural community to implement successful water quality protection programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the General Assembly encourages public policy that emphasizes voluntary, non-regulatory soil and water conservation measures, particularly programs directed at agricultural and forestry nonpoint source water pollution control.

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